



THE ARKANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD LETTER



Arkansas Department of
Health & Human Services

ANNOUNCING NEW MATERIALS TO ENRICH EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

B.A.M.M.M.!

BOOKS AND MOVEMENT A MAGICAL MIX

B.A.M.M.M.! is a series of twelve learning activities. Each activity begins with a children's book, extends to movement activities that are suggested in the book and expands to include related curriculum activities and ideas for enhancing the learning environment. A monthly B.A.M.M.M.! activity will be available from August 2005 through July 2006. The Division will mail you a copy for the months of August, September and October. If you wish to continue receiving the B.A.M.M.M. publication please call Brinda Burr, the Resource Center Manager, at 501-683-0033 or 1-800-445-3316. The copies will also be available for download as well at www.arkansas.gov/childcare/BAMMM.

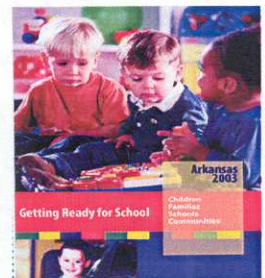
INFANT AND TODDLER FAMILY CONNECTION

This packet of materials is designed to connect families of infants and toddlers to their child care setting. Each packet contains:

- six sets of activities for young infants (birth to 8 months)
- six sets of activities for mobile infants (8 to 18 months)
- six sets of activities for toddlers (18 to 36 months).

These will be available in the next few months so continue to check the Division website for these exciting new materials at www.arkansas.gov/childcare.

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL BY COUNTY



The Division website now offers the 'Getting Ready for School' reports by county. If you are interested in tracking the progress of children in your area just click on the county you live in and the full pdf report will open. This report offers many indicators that may determine the way a child progresses in the future. To download this report now visit <http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/schoolreadinessindex.html>.

NorthCentral Arkansas **First R&R** to Complete the Quality Assurance Program

A crowd of over 50 people representing various businesses, industries, financial institutions, school districts, higher education and elected officials gathered Monday, May 9th in the Northcentral Arkansas Child Care Resource Center to spotlight a regional child care resource and referral (CCR&R) program and an award winning early childhood educator.



(Pat Sanders recognized as "Outstanding Early Childhood Professional")

Kathy Stegall with Program Support in the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education announced at a reception and press conference that CHILDREN of Northcentral Arkansas has successfully met the criteria for Best Practices in the Delivery of Consumer Education and Referral and has been designated as a Quality Assured Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Program through Child Care Aware in Washington, D.C. CHILDREN of Northcentral Arkansas is a regional child care resource and referral program serving an eight county area. CHILDREN is an acronym for Childcare Hub for Information, Learning, Development Resources, Education and Networking. Stegall explained that CHILDREN is the first CCR&R program in Arkansas to achieve this quality designation.

The program, administered by White River Planning and Development District Inc., in Batesville provides services in Cleburne, Fulton, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Sharp, Stone and Van Buren Counties. The agency held a reception and press conference with Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education staff that also featured guest speakers Senator Jack Critcher, Representative Bill Stovall and Advisory Council President Roger Hooper with Pilgrim's Pride in Clinton.



The group discussed the impact an adequate supply of quality childcare options for parents has on the overall economic and business growth of an area. Hooper gave a history of how CHILDREN began with its origin being one primarily of industry and business concern about child care availability. After a lot of work by several business and community leaders, their concern about this problem led to the creation of

CHILDREN as a regional CCR&R program, he explained. Hooper stated that due to the efforts of CHILDREN staff, child care is not the huge problem it was when the program began in 1997 with regulated child care slots increasing in each county the program serves. He reported, **the number of quality facilities has risen from 19 to 52 in the eight county service area, a 274% increase** since CHILDREN began offering resource services to child care facilities in Northcentral Arkansas. The



increase in quality facilities in Independence County, the largest county served by CHILDREN, is 533%. Stone, Sharp, Jackson and Izard Counties have experienced a 300% or better increase in the number of quality approved child care facilities since CHILDREN was established in 1997.

Representative Bill Stovall, the current Speaker of the House, spoke to the group of approximately 50 people of the importance of quality early care and education. The Arkansas Legislature has appropriated approximately \$80 million dollars into quality preschool opportunities for young children through the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) quality child care program which will be expanding during the fall school year. He affirmed that quality early learning experiences are the key to school readiness and success and the Arkansas Legislature was committed to quality early care. He commended CHILDREN for the work they do with working parents and child care facilities to support their movement into quality.

Senator Critcher, spoke about how research has proven that parents whose children are in quality child care settings feel better about working and are more productive and dependable employees. Various national foundations' research studies also show a \$17.00 or higher return on every \$1 invested in quality early learning programs. Critcher stated, "Those of you in the audience in banking know that's a pretty good return on investment." According to the National Economic Development Association, quality childcare availability is one of the top three items businesses and industries look for when selecting a location. Quality child care is also in the top three items working parents seek in a community before moving or relocating.

CHILDREN maintains a comprehensive data base and profile of each regulated child care facility in its eight-county service area. The referral component of the program is designed to help parents locate quality childcare. CHILDREN staff provide information for parents on how to choose a quality program.

The program, beginning its ninth year of operation, works to build child care capacities in areas with service gaps, recruits new providers and offers training and technical assistance help to all providers in the region to provide quality care and effectively manage their facilities.

For more information about the childcare referral services or how to start a childcare facility, contact CHILDREN staff at 870-793-5233 in Batesville or 1-800-737-2237.



Child Care Connections, Inc.

Child Care Connections, Inc. provides consultation and training to child care providers or individuals and businesses who may be interested in becoming licensed. Consultation includes:

- ☀ Record keeping and financial management
- ☀ Researching grant proposals
- ☀ Grant writing
- ☀ Vouchers/USDA applications
- ☀ Location and building standards
- ☀ Liability insurance
- ☀ Guaranteed Loans
- ☀ Profit versus nonprofit
- ☀ Licensing rules and regulations
- ☀ Establishing policies and procedures
- ☀ Staffing and professionalism

They are available to work with current providers, or anyone who needs assistance in the licensing process or needs resource information. Visit the web site at www.childcareconnectionsinc.com or you may call 501-374-0330, or email them at the following: wgslavik@yahoo.com or bakert1652@sbcglobal.net.

These services are available at NO charge to the provider and they will travel to you to assist you. Please call if you have any questions. They are looking forward to working with you and helping to make the job you do easier!



**SAVE
THIS
DATE**

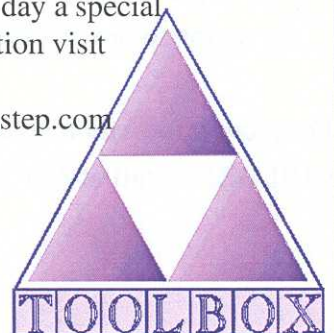
The Verification Dates for the 2005 - 2006 School Year

The new dates for Verification of Free and Reduced Priced Applications for the applications on hand at your school is from **October 1, 2005 - November 15, 2005.**

The correctly Completed Verification Packets are due into the Office of Special Nutrition Program by **December 2, 2005.** Should you need an extension you must submit in writing or fax your request to 501-682-8590 before **November 1, 2005.** We must contact the US Department of Agriculture, Dallas Regional Office for an approval on this matter.

TOOLBOX TRAINING ACTIVITY CALENDAR

The Toolbox website offers an Activity Calendar of special events, days, and even months and serves as a wonderful springboard to hundreds of ideas for projects and activities that you can do to make every program day a special one. For more information visit the website at www.toolboxonline.bigstep.com



September/October 2005

**THE ARKANSAS
EARLY CHILDHOOD LETTER**



**The Arkansas Early Childhood
Commission**

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Childhood Education,
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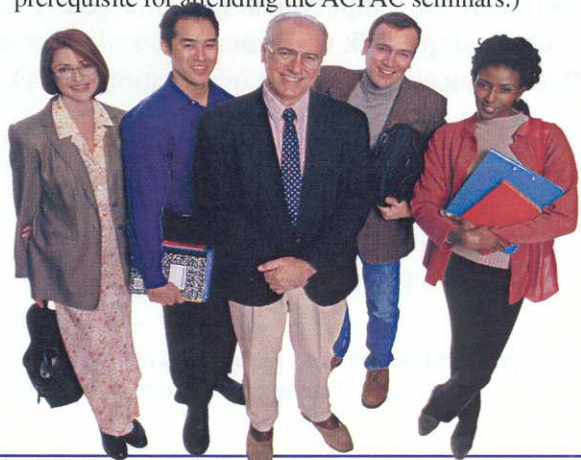


ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATE

The Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate (ACPAC) program is a coordinated system of continuing education to assist administrators in increasing their knowledge and competency in areas related to financial, personnel, and program management. The program was first presented in December of 2000. Since that time 233 participants from across the state and representing every type of early education and school-age programs have attended.

Participants attend three two-day seminars, complete assignments that allow them to apply seminar concepts in their programs, and attend 12 clock hours of approved continuing education on program-related topics. Upon completion of the 60 hours, participants receive the Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate.

The seminars coming up in the next school year are located in central Arkansas at the 4H conference center in Ferndale (West Little Rock). The dates are: September 30 & October 1, 2005 - Administration, March 3 & 4, 2006 - Coordination, April 28 & 29, 2006 - Administration. These two-day events typically begin Friday at 9:30 a.m. to allow some commute time from outlying areas of the state and adjourn at 3:30 on Saturday. The cost of the seminar is \$25 and includes meals, lodging and training materials. For more information or a registration form, please contact Geania Dickey at 501-407-0720 or geaniadickey@aol.com (*Attendance of Directors' Orientation (Session I, II and III) is a prerequisite for attending the ACPAC seminars.)



Pre-Employment DIRECT Online Training



Introduction to Early Care and Education

- 🖱 20 hours of online activities
- 🖱 10 hours of seminar or individualized activities
- 🖱 You will receive a total of 30 hours of professional development and may request 3 CEU's as you increase your skill accuracy with children.

Go to ASU Childhood Services Web site for specific directions on how to enroll: <http://chs.astate.edu>, click on Training Overview, Online Training, and Pre-Employment DIRECT or call 870-972-3055 or 1-888-429-1585 for assistance.

An instructor is available to answer your questions and to ensure your success with Online Training.

You may begin this course at any time.

Most participants complete the training within 6 months , but you may work faster or take more time.

Completion of Pre-Employment DIRECT (Early Care and Education) may qualify you to receive a CDA Scholarship. Talk with your center director or contact the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education for more information on CDA Scholarships.

Pre-Employment DIRECT consists of six modules:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 🖱 Health | 🖱 Curriculum Development |
| 🖱 Child Development | 🖱 Language and Literacy |
| 🖱 The Learning Environment | 🖱 Professionalism |

Training sponsored by Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Training provided by Arkansas State University Childhood Services.

A Quality Rating System For Arkansas

Research studies indicate that high quality early learning experiences prepare children for success in school, work, and life. Many states have already developed Quality Rating Systems (QRS) to facilitate the process of improving early learning experiences for their states' children. The development of such a rating System is similar to "star ratings" for hotels and restaurants.

A Quality Rating System has the potential to:

- improve the quality of early learning
- empower parents to become savvy consumers and choose the best early education and care for their children
- assist policymakers in creating policies that promote quality
- give early care programs a roadmap for quality improvement

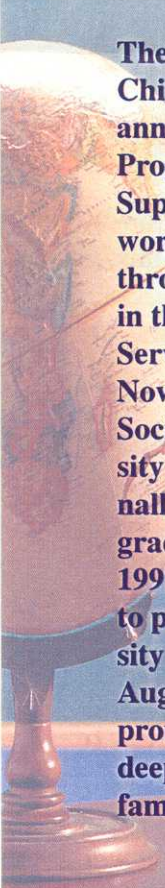


The Early Care and Education Work Group is one of five groups that make up the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative. A primary concern of this group has been to develop a plan for a tiered system of quality for early childhood

programs within our state. Arkansas currently has two tiers of quality: compliance with basic licensing, and Quality Approval. It is hoped that a Quality Rating System (QRS) will provide a pathway from basic licensing to higher quality, allowing more facilities in Arkansas to see quality as a reality.

On July 7, the Early Care and Education Work Group appointed a sub-group to write the QRS plan for Arkansas. Members of this group have served continuously on the larger group, and represent the following entities: Licensing, Quality, Program Support, Private Providers, ABC/Quality Providers, Special Needs, Child Care Resource & Referral, and Program Review. The QRS sub-group has been charged with bringing a proposal for Arkansas' QRS plan back to the larger group at the November 2005 meeting.

It is our hope that all concerned with quality care for children in Arkansas will actively participate in the development of this tool, so that we can make a difference in the lives of Arkansas' children and families. We encourage all interested parties to follow this process and submit comments, suggestions and responses to the meeting minutes and research studies. This will be made possible through a new link on the DHS/DCCECE website: <http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/qrs.htm>. Your input is valued and will be relayed to the sub-group for their serious consideration.



The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education is pleased to announce Ivory Daniels as the new Program Administrator for the Family Support Unit. Ivory has most recently worked for UAMS Head Start from 2001 through June 2004. He worked for DHS in the Division of Children and Family Services from February of 1999 until November 2001. Ivory has a BS in Sociology/Psychology from the University of Central Arkansas. Ivory is originally from Vernon, Texas where he graduated from Vernon High school in 1991. Ivory accepted a scholarship offer to play collegiate football for the University of Central Arkansas Bears from August of 94 through 96. Ivory is a proud father and husband who has a deep compassion for the children and families we serve daily.



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Mark Your Calendars!

8th Annual Arkansas Conference for Parent Educators

February 22 - 24, 2006

Watch your mail and the ACAP website www.arctf.org for information about how to participate in this outstanding annual event.

Arkansas Early Childhood Association

44th Annual AECA Conference

October 13 - 15, 2005

For more information contact AECA at 501-771-1680.

National School Lunch Week

School Lunch: It's Instrumental

October 10 - 14, 2005

National School Breakfast Week

March 6 - 10, 2006

Arkansas Childrens Week

April 2-8, 2006



For Professional Development Opportunities go to <http://chs.astate.edu>.